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## Turner's Last Stand?

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On the eve of a historic Senate debate, President Carter's SALT II treaty has been jolted from an unexpected source: proposed testimony by CIA Director Stansfield Turner making clear that Russia can indeed cheat on the treaty.

That was not at all what the president had in mind when he ordered Adm. Turner to prepare testimony bringing the Central Intelligence Agency into line on the new strategic arms limitation treaty. He wanted Turner to back Carter's own statement that the treaty "will be verifiable from the first day it is signed."

Turner's voluminous brief, still secret, has stunned the White House by sharply disagreeing with the president. Examining various "cheating scenarios" that the Kremlin is likely to attempt, Turner points out one way after another Moscow could violate provisions of the treaty. "The way Turner makes his case," one of the few officials who have seen his brief told us, "it looks like the treaty can't really be enforced at all."

That suggests a Washington backstage drama rich in its ironies and nuances. No CIA director has been more criticized outside the agency or more unpopular in it than Stan Turner. His old dreams of becoming chief of naval operations or even chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff are shattered. He has kept his job because of loyal support from Jimmy Carter, his old classmate at Annapolis.

It was naturally taken as a matter of course in this town that Turner would play Carter's SALT tune without a single errant note. If instead he pursues his present course, in the face of possible pressure from the president, it will be a remarkable valedictory for a career officer whose career has reached dead end.

The first sign of Turner's inclination came when his secret April 10 testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee was leaked a week later. Presidential aides were mortified by Turner's statement that full recovery of U.S. ability to monitor Soviet missile telemetry could take up to four years after the loss of the Iranian stations.

The reaction by Carter aides was apoplexy, not because they viewed Turner as a rebel in their midst but because they considered him too dumb to know any better. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown hurriedly issued a public statement that

be verified "adequately" in about a year. Carter aides peddled it hard to the television networks to wipe out the aftertaste of the Turner leak.

The president then ordered Turner to prepare his brief for the Senate, assuming he would make amends for his leaked April 10 indiscretion. What he has prepared will, if ever actually read by senators, be a grievous blow to Carter's hopes of ratifying an unamended SALT II.

The brief is an elaborate series of charts and graphs matching each provision of the treaty with the following: the "monitoring task" of the CIA; the "monitoring system" available; the "confidence" the United States could place in forcing Soviet compliance.

Some of these violation attempts could be quickly discovered and stopped; some might be discovered; still others could prove irresistible to the Soviets, even though they would run the risk of discovery, on grounds that the gain from cheating would outweigh the loss of being found out. In short, Turner's brief is dramatically at variance with Carter's verification pledge.

That has stunned the administration's SALT-sellers, but it conforms to the way Turner regards himself in what could be his last great service in public life. He was made unhappy not only by the leaking of his April 10 testimony but by Brown's rebuttal. He feels the administration should handle such highly classified matters in private, free of political salesmanship.

Turner also has left a strong impression that he does not regard his role as a seller of SALT. He sees no part for himself in pushing the Senate, either for or against the treaty.

Will the president (or more likely one of the president's men, considering Carter's aversion to confrontation) lean on Turner hard enough to drastically amend his brief? If such pressure is applied, the admiral's friends predict, he may resign. Turner is determined in his last stand to be neither a purveyor nor a detractor of SALT, and that is the worst kind of news for the White House.